

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Date Issued: 6/10/2013

2013 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 8

Summer Update # 1, Districts 1-6

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

2013 Chinook and Summer Chum Outlooks

The preseason outlook for the 2013 Yukon River Chinook salmon run is estimated be 98,000 to 144,000 fish and is expected to be similar to the weak run observed in 2012. If the 2013 run size is near the lower end of this projection range, extensive conservation measures will be employed to meet escapement objectives, and fishermen should not expect to meet their Chinook salmon subsistence needs.

The preseason outlook for the 2013 summer chum salmon run is estimated to be 1.5 to 1.8 million fish and is anticipated to provide for escapement, an above average subsistence harvest, and a commercially harvestable surplus range of 500,000 to 800,000 fish. Similar to the last several years, the ability to capitalize on the available surplus for commercial purposes will be affected by management actions taken to conserve Chinook salmon, which are incidentally harvested in chum salmon directed fisheries.

Management Strategies

Conservative management actions have been implemented in accordance with the preseason management plan and the subsistence salmon fishing schedule has been initiated in Districts 1-3. However, in response to the exceptionally late break up, adjustments were made to the subsistence schedules in these districts to allow for more fishing opportunity to target non-salmon species such as sheefish. Consistent with these changes, implementation of the subsistence salmon fishing schedule in the upper river districts have been delayed to provide similar early season fishing opportunity. As the schedule is initiated, gillnets will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size in each district to conserve Chinook salmon.

As the fishing season begins, the department is reminding fishermen to record their harvest on their subsistence calendars and to call the ADFG Emmonak office at 949-1320 to provide inseason harvest information. Fishermen are also strongly encouraged to voluntarily reduce their Chinook salmon harvest to not exceed 25% of their average annual harvest to help ensure adequate escapement. For example, a family that normally harvests 40 Chinook salmon should consider taking only 10 this year. Fishermen should consider shifting harvest to other salmon species, where possible, to supplement a reduced Chinook salmon harvest. Both the summer and fall chum runs are expected to be of sufficient strength to support additional subsistence harvest.

Subsistence fishing will be closed to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon. Based on the poor preseason projection, it is likely the closure will be extended to protect the second pulse (meaning an approximately 10 day closure). The closure will be initiated in District 1 and similarly implemented in upriver fishing districts and subdistricts based on migratory timing. After the closure, fishing time may be reduced to further conserve Chinook salmon.

For more detailed information please consult the 2013 Yukon Area Subsistence, Personal Use, and Commercial Salmon Fisheries Outlook and Management Strategies by following the link below.

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/FedAidPDFs/RIR.3A.2013.03.pdf>

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery- 8.5 inch set net project/ADF&G, YDFDA

Limited test fishing has begun at the Big Eddy location. The first Chinook salmon were caught on June 10. The remaining set net sites are expected to be operational at both the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth location by June 12.

Test fishing for Chinook with 8.25 inch drift gillnet gear has also begun at the Big Eddy location. No Chinook salmon have been caught.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery- 5.5 inch drift net project/ADFG, YDFDA

The summer chum drift project began at the Big Eddy location on June 10 and operations at Middle Mouth location are expected to commence by June 13.

Pilot Station sonar project/ADFG

The project is expected to begin operations later this week, approximately June 12-13.

NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.

Assessment

Spring break up was exceptionally late. Ice jams at the Yukon River mouths were reported to have released on June 5. Coastal ice is reported to be light with limited shorefast ice present. The water level in the lower river continues to be high and the debris load is moderate.

The department has not received any reports of salmon being caught in the Lower Yukon subsistence fishery.

Current Management

For the current subsistence schedule please call **(toll free): 1-866-479-7387**. The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

District 1: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open and will remain open until 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, June 12 with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

Beginning 8:00 p.m. Thursday, June 13, District 1 will be open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Thursdays until 8:00 a.m. Saturdays and from 8:00 p.m. Mondays until 8:00 a.m. Wednesdays, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

Districts 2 and 3: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open and will remain open until 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, June 11, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

Beginning 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 12, Districts 2 and 3 will be open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 8:00 a.m. Fridays and from 8:00 p.m. Sundays until 8:00 a.m. Tuesdays with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

District 4: Subsistence fishing is currently open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less until the regulatory schedule begins.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 12, subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A will consist of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size. By regulation, fishermen in Subdistrict 4-A may use drift gillnets during scheduled subsistence fishing periods on the mainstem of the Yukon River from June 10 to July 14.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 19, subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will consist of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

Subdistricts 5-A,B,C, and D: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

District 6: The subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 19, gillnets will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and subsistence salmon fishing will be open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADFG office in Emmonak at 949-1320. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.